

Does God Answer Prayer and Does Prayer Change Things

by Tony Warren



Does God change His mind? Does prayer change things? How important is Prayer in understanding the Gospel? What is the purpose of prayer? In the great design of God's immutability, does God truly answer prayer?

Many Christians have a difficult time answering these questions in light of scripture. This is partly due to their struggle with harmonizing the idea of God's sovereignty and immutability, with God's word that we should pray and that our prayers will be answered. Many have concluded that since God answers our prayers, this means that our prayer changes the course of things, or even God's mind. But while it is true that prayer changes things, the question is, exactly what does it change? Does it work to change the mindset of those who pray, or does it actually change the mind of God concerning His will? This is the puzzling question that many struggle with since God is quite clearly infallible and perfect in His purpose and will. The faithful Christian understands that God is both omniscient and perfect in His decisions, so how can scripture declare that our prayers change things and will be answered? These questions leave many with a conundrum of sorts. For if God knows all, and He is infallible and perfect in all His judgments, how can He change His mind in accordance with our will petitioned in prayer? In this FAQ, we will endeavor to shed some light upon this very difficult and perplexing question.

First and foremost we should establish that the Holy scriptures are both infallible and crystal clear that the mind of God is to do His will, not ours. Thus, any answered prayer must be considered in the light of that first principle. Second, omniscient perfect judgments (by definition) are not decisions that will be countermanded, since they are faultless, impeccable and as flawless as the God who made them. Would our humanistic judgments or decisions be better than what the mind of God had ordained, that He would allow it to supersede His divine, perfect will and providence?

Job 23:13

- "But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth."

Clearly, whatever is His will, that He does. So God's counsels are immutable, and there are no earthly interests, decision makers or counselors by whom God may be persuaded to turn away

from His divinely ordained purpose and will. If we pray for a blessing, and we receive it, it is not that we altered the course of things that God had before determined. It is that we were blessed of God to commune in prayer for what was always the purpose of God to do. In other words, God had always intended for us to petition Him (*for our own sakes*) for what it was always His will to give us. His thoughts concerning this outcome stood sure and didn't really change, it was simply that we didn't know His intention was always to give us this blessing and privilege of prayer, that we asked it according to His foreknowledge and will.

Psalms 33:11

- "The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations."

God doesn't change His counsel, direction or position on what He intended to give us. His foreknowledge that is declared in the Scriptures, and implied by His absolute perfection, means He would not make a declaration ***that He already knew would not come to fruition***. Unless it was His predetermined will to strengthen and edify us in answering our prayer. Thus this was God's decision made from before we ever knelt down to pray for it. What many Christians don't fully comprehend is that the purpose of prayer is not as a means for man to change the will and counsel God, but as a means of communion that God might change the will and counsel of man. Prayer is a channel for a personal spiritual relationship with God, so that we are the one truly being petitioned, learning and having our minds modified. We are not directing His Spirit by prayer, He is directing ours that we learn humility and dependence.

Isaiah 40:13

- "Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counselor hath taught him?"

In Godly prayer we declare that His will be done, and we don't really counsel or teach the Lord on the things our heart desires. He already knows that. But in our petition we actually are brought to a closer relationship with Him that we understand why things are as they are, and accept His judgments. While some scriptures may be interpreted by man as God changing His mind, as we attempt to explain why He said one thing or another, it can never be that God was unaware of the end "from" the beginning. As stated, His omniscience precludes Him from not knowing our petitions before any prayer that we would think might "theoretically" change His mind. Since He already knew our petitions ***from the beginning***, how could our prodding change His mind? He already intimately knew our prodding before He made the decision. So it makes no sense that afterward it convinced Him and changed His mind.

Malachi 3:6

- "For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."

Take this example of God making this Covenant of salvation. Can He change His mind because the sons of Jacob subsequently commit sin? Or, did God already know ahead of time that man would sin, and thus made provision for it before He ever made the Covenant? The later is the only view that is a rational view of an omniscient God. Likewise, shall the petitions of unrighteous man change the mind of a perfect God who always judges righteously? No, that cannot be. Yet from the scriptures, it is also clear that God says He does answer prayer. So the question remains, does God answer prayer and does prayer change things? Or more to the point, does God change His mind because of those prayers, or were the prayers that are answered always the will of God to begin with? We can come to only one Biblical conclusion if

we deem God an all-knowing being. For you can't change your mind if you already know the final outcome. Unless you are not really omniscience, or your knowledge is flawed. Obviously God uses prayer for the benefit of His people, as a help for them, that they may be strengthened thereby to grow in grace. It is truly a privilege for Christians to be able to approach God on a personal basis in supplication and prayer. It is this prayerful communion with God that brings man closer to Him. God graciously uses believers as vessels **participating** in carrying out His will. That includes building us up that we may gain spiritual strength and fortitude through our prayers to Him. We are as clay in His hands, used in the service of what He has preordained unto His glory and honor. We are not vessels that can guide His hand, direct His steps, or that can change His mind. We don't really move God by prayer, but by prayer God moves us. When we pray, it is God attending to us, through the communion of the Spirit of Christ. Our prayers to God are important and a joy to Him?

Psalms 141:2

- "Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice."

Prayers can only come up before God as the sweet smell of burning incense, if they are brought before Him in Christ Jesus. The prayers of the wicked God says He will not hear (Proverbs 15:8; 28:9). For it is Christ, the true sacrifice and burnt offering, that makes our prayers as a sweet incense. It would be truly vain and egotistical for us to think that sinful man's selfish petitions would change the mind of God. The carnal imperfect will of man in prayer is obviously vastly inferior to the perfect plan of God for him. In Christ these two wills are brought into harmony, else our prayers will not be answered as we want.

As a practical example, consider the Old Testament story of Hannah. She was a Godly woman who desired a son, and so she earnestly prayed until ultimately God answered her prayers and gave her the son she desired. Was God's mind actually changed by Hannah's prayers? No, not at all. God (being omniscient) had always intended to raise up the prophet Samuel through this woman Hannah, but it would be in His own good time, not Her time. He gloriously allowed her the privilege to petition Him in this regard as a testimony, that she (*and we who come after*) might grow in grace in the trust of the Lord for all our needs. Those people who claim that the Lord's mind was changed by her petitions are effectively declaring that they don't really think that God was "really sure" of His perfect will in this. In effect, they are questioning His Omniscience. Because such ideas imply that God really didn't have foreknowledge to **know the end from the beginning**. In other words, His mindset was different in the beginning, but listening to Hannah's words He changed it in the end. This "as if" He didn't know her words or their effect in the beginning. We must be careful to understand that the perfection of God's judgments, and man's imperfect counsel changing those judgments, are ideas that are antithetical to each other. In this instance, let's not forget that it was the Lord who shut up Hannah's womb to begin with. No doubt so that she could participate in this spiritual communion with Him, grow in grace, patience, resignation, and be set forth as an example in scripture. For God is not our bondservant or a slave to our will, but we to His.

1st Samuel 1:5-6

- "But unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion; for he loved Hannah: but the LORD had shut up her womb.
- And her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the LORD had shut up her womb."

1st Samuel 1:19-20

- "And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the LORD, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah: and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the LORD remembered her.
- Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of the LORD."

God shut up Hannah's womb, and she prayed and petitioned the Lord for a son, and God indeed answered her prayer. But there is a big difference between God answering prayer, and God having a change of mind because of prayer. This is what seems to confuse some Christians. The point being, the Lord had always ordained and intended to raise up Hannah's son Samuel as a great prophet, but He answered her prayer that she might be an example of how God uses us as vessels of service, granting us participation in His glorious salvation program. As a result of this scripture notation, she is a role model of sorts, a continuing witness to all of us who come after, of the power of prayer concerning God's people.

1st Samuel 3:19-20

- "And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.
- And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that ***Samuel was established to be a prophet of the LORD.***"

Surely we would not think that the Prophet Samuel was an "afterthought" that God had following Hannah's petition of Him. God had established and ordained that Samuel would be His prophet long before it ever came into Hannah's mind to pray for a son. It was not a quirk of fate that changed God's mind where He opened up Hannah's womb. It was God's omniscient sovereign good will and intention from the very foundation of the world to raise up Samuel as a prophet in Israel. Samuel was predestinated unto the adoption of sons from the very beginning. Thus unequivocally, undeniably, obviously, God worked through Hannah's prayers, rather than changed things because of them. This distinction is very important. It is very similar to the principle in play when God says "He remembers His covenant." That doesn't mean that God had forgotten the Covenant, it merely illustrates that God is about to act upon that Covenant. It is now brought to mind the promise He made to save a people for Himself. And it is the same principle with prayer. It does not change God's mind, but is used as a vehicle for His sovereign will to edify His people. Consequently, the objection may be raised, "*Why then do we have to pray, if God is Sovereign and will do according to His will anyway?*" Indeed, this is a very good question. The answer is twofold.

First, because God told us to pray to the father for what we need. Thus, He wants us to have communion with Him this way. God is all knowing and infinite, while we know only in part and are finite. We don't have to understand His counsel, but know it is for our good to pray, and are obedient to it. God knows and He instructs, and we obey without question because we are His servants, not His questioners or counselors.

Second, it is because we are not only growing ourselves in praying, but we are the tools that God uses to get His work done. Whether God intends that work of prayer to be in us, or in others whom we pray for, He ordained prayer to be used in the process of doing things. Thus the prayer of the elect is always meaningful and effectual because it is in our petition that His

will shall be done. Make no mistake, it brings about intangible, internal, spiritual benefits and growth for the petitioner, even when the petition is denied. All the good that we receive from God have their source from beyond human agency. As the vessels of mercy that God before has prepared unto glory, our prayer is part of that preparation in our walk in this world. Our prayer in repentance in seeking Him, or in petitioning on behalf of others, produces change in us as we submit to accept the preordained outcome. For benevolence and prayer go hand in hand, even as love of God aligns with love of our neighbors even as ourselves (Galatians 5:14). For if we truly love our neighbor, we will desire for them the same gift of salvation as we ourselves have been granted. A noble prayer that is taken perfectly before the throne, ***is according to the will of God.***

Luke 10:26-28

- "He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?
- And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.
- And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live."

Does God answer prayer and does prayer change things? Yes! We all know benevolent prayer is noble, but do we effectively understand that God's will supersedes our own (sometimes vain) will? Does God answer selfish prayer in the sense that our present monetary situation, or our physical condition, or the condition of others will be changed by our petition? No, not always. Maybe not even a majority of the time. Because it's not always God's will that one be made physically well, or that one be made financially set, or that they might have enemies removed from their sphere. But prayer does change things in that it changes the trust we have in things, others or ourselves, wherein we transition to recognize and accept our full dependence and trust upon God. Indeed, in times of doubt, trouble or despair, that is when "***we***" need these prayers the most. It is a conduit to our Lord God, and it strengthens us. Even when some may not feel God is listening, those prayers are working, because it is in human weakness that the perfection of God is realized. We find a certain strength in the Spirit, as it brings our prayers perfectly to the throne of God. He will not close His ears to the prayer of the believer, even though it may appear so.

Proverbs 15:29

- "The LORD is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous."

Sometimes it seems that many Christians today leave out the most essential element of prayer, which is God's participation. In other words, prayer isn't just words or talking into the air, the Lord is the conduit of prayer and also the arbiter deciding what the answer of the petition will be. We are not the power of prayer. There are no such, "name it and claim it" powers with the God of the Bible. Such gospels make God our slave, rather than our Savior. God is the one who ultimately answers prayer. It is always according to His good pleasure and is not prayer that brings about healing. It is the power of God in prayer, according to His sovereign will. Prayer is the vehicle, but God provides the [*energeo*] work, or power of that vehicle. Can prayer affect a person's healing? Yes, but only in the sense that God had always intended to heal that person, and had always intended your petition to be granted, working His will through your prayer. It was a God glorifying, God inspired prayer, to the benefit of both those prayed for, and the petitioner. Let's not forget, all righteousness comes from God, we are not the source.

James 5:16-17

- "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The **effectual fervent prayer** of a righteous man **availeth much**.
- Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and **he prayed earnestly** that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months."

We might assume from this that God had no intention of holding back rain, and then Elijah's prayer changed His mind. But assumption is the mother of most errors. In point of fact, God had every intention bringing this judgment of holding back rain, and inspired the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man to bring it to pass. Note here the qualification of the petitioner. He was a righteous man. Not righteous in the sense that he was a good person (*there is none good but God*), but in the sense that he was justified by faith, and thus Christ dwells within Him moving and guiding Him. His unending prayer is that the will of God be done, not his own. That's the key here. It was ultimately God's will that this is done, not Elijah's will. It is the Spirit that moved Elijah, and that works within us, according to God's will and purpose. It is what made Elijah's prayers effectual, according to God's will. How important is Prayer in understanding the Gospel?

Romans 8:26-28

- "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: **for we know not what we should pray for as we ought**: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.
- And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because **he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God**.
- And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the **called according to his purpose**."

This is the prayer that is guaranteed to be answered. God will answer the prayer that is harmonized with the purpose of God, which is carried perfectly to Him by the Holy Spirit. Because we don't really know what the perfect will of God is for anyone. Should they remain sick, should they be financially well off, all the intricate daily situations of people's lives, we do not really know exactly what we should be praying for that God wants. But the Spirit brings our imperfect desires and prayers "*perfectly*" before the Lord. Notice again that scripture says that the Spirit intercedes for us "**according to His own will**." That ultimately all these things work together for good to them that love God and are called "**according to His purpose!**" So as long as our purpose is in the will of God according to His purpose, our prayers will be answered. Selfless prayer is the result of the Holy Spirit dwelling within us, and that Spirit is the normal instrument that God uses to move us and answer prayer.

How important is Prayer in understanding the Gospel? It is very important because through prayer we are strengthened. Does God answer prayer and does prayer change things? Yes, it changes things. But it doesn't change God, because His judgments are already perfect, even as He has eternally known the end from the beginning. So what is the purpose of prayer then? It is so that we might be strengthened and brought into alignment with God's purpose, to His glory. The change that occurs is within us, and within those who we pray for, whom God is calling. Our prayer is our outward expression of dependence and reliance upon Him for all things. Prayer is for our own repentance, or to increase our awareness of the sovereignty of God and His role in our lives, and lives of others. The outcome of our prayers was already determined long before we uttered a word. For God is not left out of providence, He knows not only our desires, but our needs, and is constantly supplying them, according to His will. The beauty of weakness is confirmed through prayer, that we are made strong in our recognition of total

dependence upon the Lord. Even as the Apostle Paul petitioned the Lord for deliverance, and was strengthened not by the removal of the adversary as he had asked, but by his understanding that God's favor upon him was better than this thorn which he endured, and which it was not in God's will to remove.

2nd Corinthians 12:8-9

- "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.
- And He said unto me, ***My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness.*** Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

What the apostle Paul asked God to take away, God did not take away. But He took away so much more than the mere thorn in the flesh that was requested. He added to the spirit of Paul so much more than worldly peace or a lack of tribulation. He added to him the knowledge that in our weakness, we see revealed God's helping power more illustrious. The rejuvenation of the soul is often accomplished through our prayers. For in our weakness, we are made strong in the Lord, our faith. In our humanity, we may desire gain, life, relief, but His grace is sufficient and far better than any gain or worldly relief we might pray for. So in the final analysis, we must trust and leave it up to God to determine the matter. Our prayers are the basic declarations of our need, and they are answered through faith in God's provision, according to His will. Prayer maintains our personal relationship with God. It nourishes our trust so that we may find God-given strength in our dependence upon Him. So when we pray, we should seek the eternal things of the kingdom, not the temporal things that profit little. Ergo, pray according to the will of God.

Luke 12:29-31

- "And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind.
- For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.
- But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you."

God knows what we want, but more importantly He knows what we need, and more often than not they are not the same things. Have you ever prayed earnestly that God might intervene in some situation, either that He might heal someone, or that someone might find Christ, or that a financial situation might be made stable? Yet your prayers seemingly went unanswered? Not at all, for the answer was obviously that it was not God's will that this person be physically healed. We have to remember, ultimately everyone dies of some sickness or disease. Or the answer was that the person you prayed for will not be drawn to Christ. Again, ultimately God does not draw everyone. Or the answer was that God would not intervene to help in some financial situation. For ultimately, our trust is not to be in mammon, and His grace is sufficient. Still, it is a faithful truth that prayer is effectual. The statement is very Biblical and true that the effectual fervent prayer (James 5:16-17) availeth much. That is to say, it is of "strong force." The reason is because effectual prayer is in God's will, and His will has the power necessary to accomplish it. People are misguided in thinking that the purpose of prayer is to impose our will upon God.

Does God answer prayer and does prayer change things? Does the fervent effectual prayer change our cancerous or broken body? No, not unless it was always God's will to heal us of this

malignancy. Because Christ didn't go to the cross in order to heal our broken physical bodies, as we "all" eventually die physically. Christ went to the cross to heal our broken and sin sick souls. Yet our prayer is the channel to God that will change our outlook, and will be illustrative of our source of strength and comfort.

Will fervent effectual prayer change our financial situation? Probably not, but it will change who we look to and trust that will always supply our every need. That might mean our financial situation will get better, or it may mean it will get worse. In other words, fervent "effectual" prayer is in the will of God to be done, not our own. It may not change what we want done, but it will bring our will in harmony with the will of God.

In short, prayer changes our perspective, frame of reference, dependence, and lives in ways we cannot fully comprehend. Because Christ inspires them for our good, and the good of those around us. Prayer changes our attitude so that we can act in accordance with God's will for our lives. Therefore we should pray continually, especially on behalf of others. For in seeking to help others, you both help yourself and show the love of God working in you. If you have neglected prayer, then renew yourself now in effectual prayer. Because prayer changes things, and is for our good in all things lawful.

1st Thessalonians 5:17-18

- "Pray without ceasing.
- In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

Prayer in the Spirit of Christ, is the will of God concerning you. Praying and rejoicing go hand in hand. For according to our constancy in prayer, such will be our joy in resigned submission to the will of God in all things. For the Spirit also helps our infirmities or weaknesses, as we often do not know what we should rightly pray for. So we ask/petition God, according to His will, and it will be done "always." Praying, rejoicing and the spirit are in harmony when we ask all things according to the will of God.

John 16:22-24

- "And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.
- And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.
- Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."

What does praying in the name of Christ mean? Surely it doesn't simply mean anyone who asks something using Christ's name, it will be done. Rather, it illustrates those who are truly in the Spirit of Christ, and who have been purchased by Him for this privilege. They are the vessels of God's purposes, and the messengers of His plan. To be in prayer that will be answered in the name of Christ, is to be praying with the mind of Christ (1st Corinthians 2:16), according to God's will. Those are the prayers that will be answered. Prayers of charity, of benevolence and of love. Prayers that seek to build up, according to God's will. Even as demonstrated in the book of Matthew when the Apostles ask Jesus how they should pray. Note that in instructing them, Christ specifically teaches them to pray that the Lord's will be done.

Matthew 6:9-13

- After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.
- Thy kingdom come. ***Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.***
- Give us this day our daily bread.
- And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
- And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."

The manner in which we are to pray is, "Thy will be done!" Our desire should be toward His will for our lives, not our own. We must always pray with this "qualification" in mind. For we must be careful not to fall into the snare of effectively acting as if God is our slave we call upon to do our bidding. In prayer, we remember that we are His slaves/servants to do His will. True, it may sometimes "appear" that God is changing to accommodate us, but truly we are changing to accommodate God, and the outcome was already written in the book ahead of time.

We can see this principle illustrated in the practical example of Abraham pleading with God to spare the wicked city of Sodom. From the perspective of Abraham we may surmise he may very well be thinking that he is changing God's mind on the issue. In Genesis chapter 18 Abraham petitions God that if there are 50 righteous in the city, that He will not destroy it. God answers, if there are fifty, the city will not be destroyed. I'm sure Abraham, being a man of compassion, senses there may not be fifty and petitions again that if there are forty-five, will God please spare the city. God answers, he will spare the city if there are forty-five. This continues, and Abraham gets all the way down to ten. God says, yes, if there are ten righteous, He will not destroy Sodom. The point here being, there were "none righteous" in the city but those whom God had ordained preserved, Lot and his daughters. Yet through Lot's petitioning, God is demonstrating He is not destroying righteous people, and in doing so is also enlightening Abraham's understanding of both God, himself, and that city. This is the power of our petitions to the Lord. Abraham's petition did not make a difference in the outcome of the city of Sodom, but it did change Abraham's understanding and knowledge of God. Ergo, in communing with God, we are the ones enlightened and changed and who grow in grace and understanding. In truth, Abraham's petitioning didn't change God's "perfect" and righteous plan for Sodom anymore than the prayers of the people of Nineveh changed God's plan for them. It was always His plan to save the city of Nineveh and use them as an example (Matthew 12:41) of repentance and salvation. God had ordained their repentance to be used as an example to Israel. God uses prayer in this way to help and change people. That is the point. Because prayer did not change God's mind, as an omniscient God who ***knew all along*** that He would not destroy Nineveh. i.e., the people's prayer in sackcloth and ashes were not a pleasant surprise to an Omniscient God, thus it is impossible that God's mind was changed when He heard their prayer. He had foreknowledge of all these things before He ever said He would destroy Nineveh.

In [*agape*] charity or benevolent love, when we use intercessory prayer on behalf of others, we are affecting ourselves, and possibly them. But we are not changing God's counsel. In this interpersonal sharing, we experience the love of God, the communion with God, and the acceptance of His will and perfect judgments, over our own. It is we who have our minds changed by prayer. So when the question is asked, "Does Prayer Change Things?" The answer is yes, but it does not change an immutable omniscient God who always makes perfect judgments. Are our prayers answered? Yes! The fact is, all the prayers of God's elect are answered, just not always in the manner that the petitioner might like. As demonstrated in Abraham's prayer for Sodom, or David's prayer for the life of his son. For prayer does not put

the power in our hands, it is the recognition that all power ultimately belongs to God, and answered prayer is in His power.

Revelation 3:19

- "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."

Should we pray that this chastisement be removed from us, or would true effectual perfect prayer be a petition that whatever act we did to incur this chastisement, be removed? The thing we are praying to have removed may very well be God's chastisement upon us for our dereliction or unfaithfulness. Our prayer, in communion with God, may bring this important fact to light. When we open up a line to God, God speaks to us in ways we cannot fully understand. But it indeed is a real communion together in love, for our benefit. The Phrase, "ask and it shall be given," is not a blank check, but rather a goad to righteousness and harmony with God.

Still, others have asked to make their prayers more real and less like they are talking to themselves? The answer is to be cognizant that you are talking to God, and so speak accordingly. Because if you have the mindset where you feel you are talking to yourself, you are not on the right path to begin with. When you have a personal relationship with someone, you talk to them. The more personal that relationship, the more trusting, open and honest that talk will be. When we are truly saved, we have that very personal relationship to God. The Holy Spirit of God is the vehicle of the love of the Father, through the Son. We are never guaranteed that prayer for any physical healing, gain or miracle will be granted. What prayers are guaranteed to be answered are prayers the Holy Spirit itself maketh intercession for, with groanings which cannot be uttered. In the bond of prayer, which is the bond of charity [agape] or love, we are changed forever. A perfect God provides us with that which always improves our spiritual well being, and denies us whatever would detract from this. Ergo, a perfect God doesn't change according to our prayers, He has already made provision for us for everything for our good, according to His will. Thus we need to come to grips with the truth that the real purpose of prayer is to assist us beyond the circle of our own vain and selfish will and desires.

Does our praying really make a difference? The Biblical answer is yes. The difference prayer makes is in us and in those around us, not in God. Prayer is for our sakes, for it is through prayer that the believer is learning more about Himself through his lifeline to God. In this spiritual conduit of power he can better understand that the Lord is his only protector, foundation, strength and fortress. For it is in this conductor of prayer to God, that His will is revealed to His servants. It is how we consciously petition and receive power from on high, that we may live the life that God intends for us. The practice of petitionary prayer is very Biblical, and the truth of its efficacy is deeply rooted in the scriptures. God desires us to petition Him that we may grow in grace and communion with God, by our identification with Him. It instills God-consciousness in an individual. For an integral part of the purpose of prayer is to assist us in aligning ourselves with God. In the act of repentance and petitionary prayer, God teaches us to submit to His will. Even as David, who both repented and prayed earnestly for the life of his son (2nd Samuel 12:16), but ultimately accepted what he subsequently learned was the will of God in the matter. In this we see demonstrated both his trust and His faith. Unlike humanistic man, he is not angry with God, not blaming God, not pointing an accusing finger at God, but growing in Grace whereby he can accept God's will. i.e., it's not that God was unforgiving, or that He couldn't spare David's son's life, but that David might learn and grow from this, to his own good, to the glory of God. The whole purpose of prayer is conformity with the will of God, not the commanding of our own, in self-gratification.

Again, "Does God answer prayer and does prayer change things?" ...Absolutely! For prayer, viewed in this very Biblical way, accepts God as sovereign and makes every prayer righteous, answered, and a blessing. Through those prayers we learn more about ourselves, and how to live nobly that we orient ourselves properly toward God. Let us then thank the Lord for the privilege of coming boldly before the throne of grace in humble prayer. May He graciously grant us the wisdom to trust in Him fully, that we possess the ability to succeed in all of life's noble and worthy challenges and endeavors, through His blessing of prayer!

Amen!

Peace,

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